

of the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. This is the next necessary step for implementation of our conditions. I'm pleased that it will take place, and I hope the talks will proceed professionally and expeditiously.

As I said yesterday, our diplomatic and military efforts will continue until we see Serb forces begin to withdraw in a full-scale manner. Our experience in the Balkans teaches us that true peace can only come when progress in discussions is followed by progress on the ground.

At the same time, there is an enormous opportunity to be seized here, a chance to shift our focus from defeating something evil to building something good; a chance to work with our Allies to bring a stable and prosperous and democratic southeastern Europe, in which people are never again singled out for destruction simply because of their religious faith or their ethnic origin. This is a goal that has been worth fighting for over the last weeks, a goal which must be uppermost in our minds as we make sure our conditions are met, a goal we must work for with steadfast determination in the months and in the years to come.

And I believe that the overwhelming majority of Americans share this goal. We do not want our children to grow up in a world which is dominated by people who believe they can kill innocent civilians because of the way they worship God or the way they were born.

Disability Employment Awards

Fifty years ago Harry Truman, the very first President to present the awards that we present today, set a goal for our Nation. I'd like to repeat it: to give every American with a disability the chance to play their full part in strengthening our Nation and sharing the greatest satisfaction of American life, to be independent and self-supporting.

Today we gather to honor three Americans whose efforts to bring more and more people with disabilities into the world of work have moved us closer to that great and just goal. Since the founding of our Nation, work has been at the heart of the American dream. Because millions of Americans have had the opportunity to work and to build better lives

for themselves and their families, our Nation is enjoying historic strength and prosperity. Through work, we reinforce the values that hold us together as a society, the values of responsibility, perseverance, striving for the future.

And in so many ways, we define ourselves as Americans not only by our families and our hometowns but by our work. Often, the first question Americans ask each other is not, who are your parents or where do you live but what do you do. Today, still, there are too many Americans with disabilities who've never had the chance to answer that question. Even as we celebrate more than 18 million new jobs and a nationwide unemployment rate of 4.2 percent, the lowest in a generation, as the Secretary has said, 75 percent of Americans with disabilities remain unemployed. And of that number, 72 percent, almost three-quarters, say they want to go to work.

This is not just a missed opportunity for Americans with disabilities. It's a missed opportunity for America. This is an era now of labor shortages, where companies go begging for employees they need to stay competitive in the global economy. And we simply cannot afford to ignore the potential of millions of potential workers simply because they have a disability.

One of the things I have spent a great deal of time on in the last year, particularly, is trying to work with my economic advisers on issues that only peripherally involve the disability community but that you are a central part of resolving. And it is this: How can we continue to grow this economy and lift the standards of living of our people until we embrace everybody who has not participated in the recovery; keep the recovery going, which is already the longest peacetime recovery in history, and not have an explosion of inflation?

There are—if you think about it, there are only, I would argue to you, three possible answers to that. You either have to get more workers who are unemployed, generally, in the society, into the work force so that they not only are helping themselves but helping the rest of us by becoming consumers and taxpayers and growing the economy; you have to go to those discreet areas where